

“We define learning as the transformative process of taking in information that, when internalized and mixed with what we have experienced, changes what we know and builds on what we can do. It is based on input, process, and reflection. It is what changes us.” — **Marcia Conner**

Introduction

A novel one-year fellowship program in pandemic preparedness has been developed through a collaboration between the New York Presbyterian Enterprise (NYP) and ICAP at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Building on ICAP’s experience responding to the HIV pandemic in resource-constrained settings, and the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak, the fellowship aims to put in practice innovations in healthcare delivery while reflecting on the past experience.¹⁻² First conceptualized three years ago amidst the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the program aims to foster active learning for hospital staff who were at the forefront of the pandemic response,³⁻⁴ and who are working to identify and approach problems in a way that leads to more comprehensive and effective solutions. Consequently, the fellowship brings together public health and health system leaders to capture the experience and lessons learned over the past three years. In so doing, it aims to strengthen innovative models of health systems for the inevitable future crises we will face.

Conclusion

In any emergency, time is the most precious commodity when it comes to saving lives, mitigating the impacts of disease and inequity, and limiting secondary impacts. With swift and effective responses, disruption to society and economies will minimize. The lack of preparedness during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic must serve as a lesson learned, as we ensure we do not again suffer from systems failure and the lack of cadre who can respond quickly and efficiently to crises. While spillover of zoonotic diseases is inevitable and climate-related emergencies are

likely to accelerate them, with current knowledge, expertise and improved collaboration at all levels, we have to implement the next steps to ensure that the next epidemic is adequately managed and contained locally, and does not develop into a global pandemic. By implementing the above next steps, hospitals can build a comprehensive and reliable inventory of staff skills, enabling them to respond effectively to future health crises through optimized surge and redeployment strategies.

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